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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program is to provide a set of supervised support services to teachers in their first year of teaching. A beginning teacher support team is comprised of an experienced peer teacher, a building level administrator, and a third individual who may be a teacher educator. The team conducts formative evaluations of the beginning teacher's performance and provides feedback to help improve performance. At least three formative evaluations are conducted during the year. Near the year's end a summative evaluation is conducted which determines whether a regular teaching certificate will be given. A description is given of the process of implementing this program. The Florida Performance Measurement System is discussed with a description provided of how the generic teaching competencies used in the evaluation were developed from the existing research base. Five significant outcomes of the program are outlined, and current refinements being developed are described. (JD)

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THE FLORIDA BEGINNING TEACHER PROGRAM
a paper prepared for
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by

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The Florida Beginning Teacher Program has two central purposes, the improvement and documentation of successful performance of beginning teachers. These purposes are accomplished through a comprehensive and integrated system of support, training and evaluation of generic teaching competencies during the first year of teaching in Florida. It has as its philosophical foundation several propositions and beliefs that are widely held by practitioners, those who prepare them and the public they serve.

First, the demands placed on teachers are greater than ever before. They have increased markedly as the result of the increasing complexity of our society and parallel expectations for the increased performance of those who attend school. The profession is necessarily more complex than it was thirty years ago; to teach well requires a highly skilled and competent professional.

Second, there is an expanded and increasingly recognized knowledge base for teacher education. It is attributable to a substantial body of research on classroom teaching, much of it conducted during the decade from the mid-sixties through the mid-seventies. During the past several years researchers have collected these studies and assembled them in a form which has facilitated their application. Teachers and teacher educators are expected to apply this professional knowledge and to employ professional skills in their practice.

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Third, there is great concern as to whether teacher preparation programs in their present form, can adequately meet the demands of more rigorious professional practice. Evidence reveals that almost no major changes have occurred in the time allocated or content provided for preservice teacher education in the last 50 years, despite significant advances in knowledge and fundamental changes in educational structures and practices in schools and in other social agencies.

Fourth, the public recognizes the vital role played by teachers in providing our youth with an acceptable level of educational opportunity. Perhaps, more than ever before, the public recognizes the impact of education on the quality of adult life. The public holds high expectations for teachers as reflected in legislative action on competency testing, merit pay, career ladders, meritorious schools and mainstreaming. The quality of the teachers who staff our schools and teacher preparation programs in their current form are major matters of national concern.

Fifth, knowledgeable individuals recognize that a fully developed preservice teacher preparation program adequate to prepare teachers for the 21st century requires more than the traditional four years allocated to teacher education for the last half-century. At the same time, others feel that extending the time for preservice teacher preparation beyond four years is not politically and economically feasible at this time. Nevertheless, it appears that the level of interest in the adoption of, five-year preservice preparation programs is increasing.

Sixth, induction into the teaching profession, as is true in other professions, is a formative and critical period. It is a period of great difficulty when beginning practitioners need assistance and support as well as evaluation. All beginning teachers have problems and the problems vary with the individual and the setting in which they teach. Preservice programs in education, and in other professions as well, are not able to prepare the entering professional for all the problems which they will encounter.

Seventh, a major reason for attrition from the profession may well stem from the lack of an integrated system of support, assistance and evaluation available to entering professionals during the induction period. Induction too often becomes a matter of survival under difficult conditions.

Eighth, the responsibility for quality control, for deciding who can serve our youth acceptably and effectively, rests with the collective profession. It does not rest solely with teacher educators nor solely with practitioners. In the final analysis teachers must have knowledge of the subject matter taught and essential professional knowledge, and they must be able to apply that knowledge in a professional setting. The Florida Beginning Teacher Program is designed to assist the entering teacher in the transition from a college student to a documentedly acceptable professional.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY IN BRIEF

The Florida Beginning Teacher Program did not spring full bloom into life a short time ago. Its roots run deep. The 1978 and 1979 sessions of the Florida legislature addressed early participation in the classroom for students in teacher education programs and a year-long internship prior to the issuance of the regular teaching certificate. The 1981 session further addressed this concept by requiring participation in a year-long beginning teacher program rather than the internship. This program became effective on July 1, 1982.

In 1978, legislative action initiated by recommendations of the Council on Teacher Education were taken through what is widely regarded as landmark legislation, Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 549. The Legislature found that policies proposed by Florida teacher training institutions to place student teachers in the classroom as early in their undergraduate program as practicable were desirable. The act required a year-long internship which was later to become the Florida Beginning Teacher Program. It also required an acceptable score on a nationally-normed test for college entrance as a condition for admission to a teacher preparation

program and successful performance on a certification examination. In 1978 that was sweeping action on a set of accountability measures which were later much more widely adopted throughout the United States.

Committee Substitute for House Bill 1689, passed by the 1979 Legislature, provided that "beginning July 1, 1981, no individual shall be issued a regular certificate until he has completed 3+ school years of satisfactory teaching pursuant to law and such other criteria as the state board shall require by rule, or a year-long internship approved by the state board. The department, in conjunction with teacher education centers and colleges of education, shall provide for model satisfactory teaching and internship programs to be implemented in selected districts. The models shall be evaluated by the department, and the specifications for such programs shall be selected for implementation in all districts by July 1, 1981."

During the 1981 legislative session, Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 238 was enacted. This Act provided that one requirement for the initial regular teaching certificate was successful completion of a year-long beginning teacher program. Three years of satisfactory out-of-state teaching experience could be substituted for participation in the beginning teacher program. The Act was amended in 1983 to require that all teachers in their first year of teaching in Florida participate in the Florida Beginning Teacher Program. In 1984 the Act was amended again to permit experienced teachers who can demonstrate successful performance at anytime during the first 90 days of initial employment to opt-out of the full year Florida Beginning Teacher Program requirements.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL

The Office of Teacher Education, Certification and Staff Development in the Department of Education has played a central role throughout the design and implementation of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program. In the process it has mobilized the combined support and resources of school districts and colleges of education.

In September, 1979, institutions of higher education and teacher education centers were requested to submit proposals which addressed the development of program models. The proposals were to address twelve specific program components related to training experiences, and opportunities for inservice supervision, performance assessment and feedback. Sixteen proposals were received and six were funded during the 1979-80 school year. Those funded represented one large district, one medium district, one small district, one multi-district teacher education center, one private university and one state university. Models that addressed the specified elements of the program were developed and completed by each of the projects during 1979-80. Two of the projects elected not to participate in the field testing of models during the following year. The field testing of the other four models was completed by July, 1981, and the results and supporting materials were submitted to the Office of Teacher Education, Certification and Staff Development.

The basic framework of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program was established by recommendations developed by the Education Standards Commission with the assistance of the Department of Education, with consideration of recommendations received from the educational community within the state. The Education Standards Commission advises the State Board of Education. It is composed of 24 individuals: twelve teachers, two principals, one superintendent, one teacher education center director, three representatives from higher education, one of whom shall be from a private institution, one community college administrator and four lay persons, two of whom shall be school board members. Members of the Commission are recommended by the Commissioner of Education, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

At the outset the Education Standards Commission was concerned with supporting and documenting the successful induction of beginning teachers into the profession. Perhaps that is why in the early discussions there was interest in naming the program the Florida Beginning Teacher Support Plan. Nevertheless, the program recommended contained the following elements:

1. A beginning teacher support team. The team must be comprised of three individuals; an experienced peer teacher, a building level administrator and a third individual who may be a teacher educator.

2. Periodic formative evaluations must be conducted. The purpose of the support team is to conduct formative evaluations of the performance of the beginning teacher and to provide feedback designed to help the individual beginning teachers improve their performance. At least three formative evaluations must be conducted during the year.

3. Near the conclusion of the year a summative evaluation must be conducted. Successful performance must be demonstrated in order for the beginning teacher, who holds a temporary certificate, to be recommended for a regular certificate. Individuals must be trained in the use of the summative evaluation instrument upon which the recommendation is based.

The recommendations for the Florida Beginning Teacher Program made by the Education Standards Commission were drafted in State Board Rule (which has the effect of law) by the Office of Teacher Education, Certification and Staff Development. They were subsequently adopted by the State Board of Education at its meeting in November, 1981, as State Board Rule 6A-5.75.

The purpose of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program, as stated in this Rule is to provide a set of supervised support services for teachers in their first year of teaching in Florida, to assist them in their continued professional development and to verify satisfactory performance of the generic teaching competencies. The Rule addresses the requirements for the Beginning Teacher Program to be implemented by school districts and private schools. Included in the Rule are definitions of terms related to the program, procedures, criteria for program approval, criteria for successful completion and appeal procedures. The Rule further requires that the plan become a

section of the State approved district Master Plan for Inservice Education, and therefore, be subject to provisions for amending and updating that plan.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

A Beginning Teacher Program Handbook to assist school district and private school personnel with the implementation and administration of the Beginning Teacher Program was developed by the Office of Teacher Education, Certification, and Staff Development. Criteria specified in statute and rule and data taken from the four pilot projects provide the basis of the Handbook. Appendices to the Handbook include the legislation, State Board Rule, evaluation strategies for the essential competencies and personnel who serve as the district contact for the Beginning Teacher Program. The purpose of the Handbook is to share strategies, documents and procedures to assist each district and private school in the development of Beginning Teacher Program Plans.

To provide further assistance to school districts and private schools in the initial stages of implementation, program contact persons for all districts, teacher education centers and colleges and universities were invited to attend one of eight regional meetings conducted by the Office of Teacher Education, Certification and Staff Development during November and December, 1981.

At each of the regional meetings, the Handbook was presented and discussed in detail, provisions of the rule were explained, and timelines for the development of the plan were identified. The concerns of participants were gathered for consideration by the Department in an attempt to provide as much assistance to school districts as possible as they developed their plans. Following the regional meetings personnel from the Office of Teacher Education, Certification and Staff Development made approximately thirty visits to meet with planning committees in the early stages of their development of a district plan.

Beginning Teacher Program Plans were submitted to the Department on or before May 1, 1982, for review. An evaluation instrument that specified criteria for each of the twelve items required in the plan was developed for the review. Teams of trained reviewers with members from the Office of Teacher Education, Certification and Staff Development, school districts and universities critiqued the plans. The results of the critiques were transmitted to the individuals who developed the plans.

FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

State Board Rule requires the verification of the demonstration of the Florida generic teaching competencies through a summative evaluation process. This requirement precipitated a concern for the development of standardized procedures for conducting systematic observation and performance evaluation of beginning teachers in Florida to ensure consistency from teacher to teacher, school to school and district to district within the State. In November, 1981, a number of interested professionals from Florida school districts, colleges and universities and teacher education centers met to plan for the development of a system that would provide for the formative and summative evaluation of beginning teachers' performance in the classroom. Following this meeting, all school districts, colleges and universities and teacher education centers were invited to participate and contribute to a coalition effort that seemed promising even though no State appropriation was available for this purpose.

Since its beginning, the Florida Coalition has focused its efforts on the development of a system for the measurement and development of teacher performance. The development of the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) required that the knowledge relative to teacher effectiveness that has accumulated from research on teaching be so assembled and organized that it could be used in the development of a valid and reliable performance observation instrument and a corresponding set of training materials for local Beginning Teacher Support Systems. Furthermore, it was necessary that the knowledge base on teacher effectiveness be integrated with the Florida generic teaching competencies so that the conventional wisdom of the teaching profession also be reflected in both the observation system and the training

materials. This process eventually led to the revision of the Florida generic teaching competencies to reflect the research base of the Florida Performance Measurement System. To accomplish these purposes, four teams were assembled.

Team One was a research team. The purpose of this team was to comb the research literature to establish a knowledge base on teacher effectiveness that was as comprehensive and consistent as the current research would permit. The team then assembled the research findings into categories or domains that addressed particular areas of teacher behavior or teaching conditions. The domains are:

1.0 PLANNING
This refers to teacher performance in daily, weekly and long range planning in the preparation phase of teaching.

2.0 MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT CONDUCT
This domain includes teacher activities which minimize the frequency of disruptive student conduct.

3.0 INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT
This domain includes teacher behaviors which provide for the conservation of class time, organization and delivery of instruction and teacher-student interaction.

4.0 PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
This area includes teacher behaviors associated with the manipulation of the content of instruction to include learning.

5.0 COMMUNICATION: VERBAL AND NONVERBAL
This domain deals with verbal and nonverbal teacher behavior that evokes and expresses information and personal relationships.

6.0 EVALUATION

This area includes the ways teachers develop and maintain an environment in which students can validly demonstrate their knowledge, skills, etc., and receive adequate information about the quality of their test performance.

Two new domains are under development. Domain 7.0 addresses teacher behaviors in settings where the teacher is working with one student or parent. Domain 8.0 deals with consultation, the situation where the teacher is working with other professional personnel. The next domain to be developed will address teacher behaviors that promote higher levels of thinking by students.

Team Two was an Integration-Research Team. It had the responsibility of coordinating the research on effective teaching with the Florida generic competencies. A major task of the team was to determine whether or not some of the Florida competencies that are not observable in the classroom can be evaluated by some other form of examination such as an interview, special assignment, written document or other items included in the beginning teacher's portfolio.

Team Two had the further responsibility of preparing a manual of suggested procedures for documentation of those competencies not directly observable in the classroom and, therefore, not included in the observation instruments.

Team Three was the Instrument Development Team. This team had the responsibility of developing the performance observation instruments based on specific behavioral indicators derived from the research-validated knowledge base. The system includes two types of instruments. The first type is a set of formative instruments, one for each of the six domains. These instruments are designed to collect data for the diagnosis of performance in a specific domain. The second type is a summative observation instrument designed to determine the extent to which the overall performance of the teacher conforms to best practice.

Team Four was the Florida Performance Measurement System Training Design Team. The primary responsibility of this team was to design a training program for preparing school administrators, peer teachers, and other educators to use the performance measurement system in a reliable manner.

In order to meet the statewide need for training, it was necessry to prepare teams of trainers capable of delivering several types of workshops with a high degree of reliability. The Coalition was directly involved in the training of university and district personnel who served as Training Leaders and Training Team Members in the delivery of training to school-level support teams.

The Coalition initiated and coordinated the following training activities:

1. The training of approximately 40 Training Leaders from universities and districts who conducted a variety of workshops and information sessions.

2. The training of approximately 80 Training Team Members who worked with Training Leaders to deliver the workshops and information sessions.

3. The design and coordination of the delivery of approximately 100 workshops for the training of school administrators in the use of the performance measurement system.

4. The development of a set of manuals to be used by Training Leaders and training Team Members. The set of manuals included:

    a. The FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM HANDBOOK which contained an extensive discussion of each domain, the subskills within each domain and the integration of the subskills within the domain with the Florida generic teaching competencies.

b. The FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM TRAINER'S MANUAL which contained a narrative description of each training activity, its objectives, procedures, setting, needed equipment and materials and typescripts of mediated events.

c. The FLORIDA PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL which contained the materials necessary for participants' use during the initial training workshops.

d. The HANDBOOK FOR THE FLORIDA BEGINNING TEACHER which was designed to provide the beginning teacher with information about the Florida Beginning Teacher Program. It also identifies problems and suggests how the teacher might deal with the problems.

e. The HANDBOOK FOR THE BEGINNING TEACHER'S SUPPORT STAFF contains information intended to enable members of the support staff to provide supervised support services to the beginning teacher who is in the process of demonstrating the generic teaching competencies. This handbook provides the support staff member a reference document about the requirements of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program, observing and conferencing with the beginning teacher and the design of a professional development plan for the teacher.

OUTCOMES OF THE FLORIDA BEGINNING TEACHER PROGRAM

The effort to develop the Florida Beginning Teacher Program has not yielded disappointing results. The outcomes of the Coalition's work were both comprehensive and significant in terms of its effects on preservice and inservice teacher education, the evaluation of teacher performance, and collaboration among teachers, administrators, school districts, teacher education centers, universities, and the Department of Education. These outcomes include:

1. Improved beginning teacher performance. Greater emphasis has been placed on the beginning teacher's demonstration of specific competencies that are related to increased student achievement and improved classroom conduct. This emphasis takes the form of systematic observation and corrective feedback followed by prescriptive inservice opportunities. Supporting data on the initial effects of the program on beginning teacher performance are reported below.

   A study is underway to determine increase in performance from the first diagnostic observation to the final summative observation. Preliminary results for approximately 1,000 beginning teachers in forty school districts indicate that the teacher's performance, as measured by the summative observation instrument of the Florida Performance Measurement System, will show a considerable gain in demonstration of the positive indicators on the instrument.

   Data from a second study of 533 graduates of Florida approved programs of preservice teacher education indicate that these graduates are very successful in completing the Florida Beginning Teacher Program. These graduates represent 107 approved programs in 16 public and private institutions of higher education in Florida. 527 of these graduates, or 99 percent, were successful in completing the program.

2. Recognition of the career-long, collaborative nature of teacher education. The involvement of preservice teacher educators in the continuing professional education of teachers has increased as a result of the Beginning Teacher Program. Faculty members from all public universities and many private institutions have been trained in the use of the FPMS. Over half of the certified FPMS Trainers who provide training and assistance to peer teachers and administrators who serve on beginning teacher support teams are preservice teacher educators. Faculty members also serve on individual beginning teachers' support teams, provide prescribed inservice

and participate in the development of training materials for beginning teachers and support team members.

Peer teachers and school administrators have assumed a new role as teacher educators in the school setting. This role involves observing in beginning teachers' classrooms, identifying strengths and weaknesses in their performance, prescribing and delivering needed inservice, and documenting the demonstration of essential teaching competencies.

Teacher education centers have supported this collaborative teacher education initiative by providing inservice training in research on effective teaching, observation skills, and clinical supervision for teachers and administrators, as well as training in effective teaching for beginning teachers.

3. Increased knowledge and skill in performance evaluation. Over 8,000 administrators, teacher educators, teachers and other professionals have received training in the research on effective teaching and the observation of classroom performance. Three-fourths of Florida school principals are currently listed as approved observers on the list published by the Department of Education. Teacher educators at all levels on the career ladder are now able to analyze teaching through a common set of research-based behavioral indicators and record data concerning the extent to which a teacher's performance conforms to those indicators on formative and summative evaluation instruments.

   Faculty members, school administrators, teachers, district staff members, teacher education centers and Department of Education staff have collaborated in the development, validation, and norming of the FPMS summative observation instrument.

4. Revision of preservice teacher education programs. The availability of performance data on program graduates and the opportunity to work closely with districts in the implementation of the Beginning

Teacher Program have served to heighten the accountability of colleges and departments of education for the performance of their students. Public and private institutions have initiated activities that reflect a concern for teaching and assessing specific competencies required of beginning teachers. Faculty members from each of the twenty-six institutions offering teacher education programs have been provided opportunities to participate in inservice on the FPMS and its research base. At some institutions, course outlines have been examined and revised to ensure the inclusion of information about and practice of the effective teacher behaviors drawn from research. Field experiences have been redesigned and clinical supervisors updated in order to provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate their ability to perform essential teaching competencies.

Performance data on graduates during the second year of Beginning Teacher Program implementation are now being analyzed for the purpose of reporting to colleges and universities. This information will provide a basis for further program revision and evaluation.

5. Development of a best-practice performance evaluation model. The development of the FPMS and its application in the Beginning Teacher Program has provided a set of criteria and procedures to guide the design of valid, reliable and normed performance evaluation systems for other programs and purposes. A number of Florida school districts have adopted the summative observation instrument of the FPMS for use in the annual evaluation of all teachers. This system has recently been approved for use in the statewide Master Teacher Program.

THE CURRENT CONDITION

The Florida Beginning Teacher Program has been in a continuous state of development and evaluation since the original model was proposed by COTE, adopted in legislation, refined by the Education Standards Commission and

subsequently implemented by the State Board of Education. It is anticipated that further improvement and modification is yet to come. The program has served as a catalyst for change in teacher education and certification in Florida. Program evaluations have yielded the following outcomes.

An evaluation of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program that was completed at the end of the first year in which the program was in effect included a survey of beginning teachers and their support staff members. There were 534 school administrators, 713 peer teachers, 386 other professional educators and 689 beginning teachers who responded to the survey. Ninety-two percent of all respondents believed that the program was beneficial and should be continued. However, modifications to the program for experienced teachers were recommended by forty-five percent of the respondents. Other recommendations made by all responding categories of participants included:

1. A clear definition of the relationship between the indicators of the Florida Performance Measurement System and the verification of the generic teaching competencies is needed.

2. The quality of school district level communication, organization and training needs improvement.

3. Existing resources are insufficient to effectively implement the program.

4. The program as structured is seen as inappropriate for teachers with previous experience.

5. Beginning Teacher Program procedures should be reviewed.

6. Program revision and modification should be made after representative input is received from personnel who serve in special areas such as vocational and exceptional child education.

A survey of 1983-84 beginning teachers sought information about items such as preservice teacher education experiences of the beginner, whether the teacher was teaching in the area of certification when observed for verification of the generic teaching competencies and the number of years of teaching experience. A total of 2,472 beginning teachers responded to the survey.

Some of the results of the survey expressed as a percentage of the total respondents are:

1. Teaching experience
   a. less than one year - 55%
   b. one to five years - 25%
   c. more than five years - 18%
2. First summative observation
   - conducted while teaching in field of certification - 86%
3. Final summative observation
   - conducted while teaching in field of certification - 83%
4. Academic preparation outside college of teacher preparation.
   a. very effective - 58%
   b. somewhat effective - 28%
   c. not effective - 2%
   d. not taught - 10%
5. Preparation for teaching
   a. Planning of instruction
      1. very effective - 52%
      2. somewhat effective - 35%
      3. not effective - 4%
      4. not taught - 8%
   b. Control of student conduct
      1. very effective - 28%
      2. somewhat effective - 45%
      3. not effective - 12%
      4. not taught - 14%

c. Instructional organization and development
   1. very effective - 52%
   2. somewhat effective - 35%
   3. not effective - 5%
   4. not taught - 7%

d. Presentation of subject matter
   1. very effective - 56%
   2. somewhat effective - 32%
   3. not effective - 4%
   4. not taught - 7%

e. Communication
   1. very effective - 54%
   2. somewhat effective - 35%
   3. not effective - 3%
   4. not taught - 7%

f. Test taking skills
   1. very effective - 41%
   2. somewhat effective - 38%
   3. not effective - 7%
   4. not taught - 12%

g. Intern experience
   1. very effective - 69%
   2. somewhat effective - 14%
   3. not effective - 2%
   4. not taught - 14%

The successful induction of beginning teachers into the profession has long been of concern to those who prepare them as well as those who employ them. The Florida Beginning Teacher Program serves as an example of a statewide program designed to address the need for a systematic developmental, competency-based approach to the induction level of teacher education. The formative aspects of the program are designed to assist the beginning teacher in acquiring or improving teaching knowledge and skills which are essential to successful entry into the profession. The summative aspects of the

program are designed to protect the public interest by establishing that the entering teacher can perform at an acceptable level of professional practice. It is especially noteworthy that the indicators of effective professional practice contained in the Florida Performance Measurement System are drawn from the teacher effectiveness research.

The Florida Beginning Teacher Program merits careful examination by other states concerned with improving the performance of beginning teachers.